United Nations E/ICEF/2010/13

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
5 April 2010

Original: English

For information

United Nations Children's Fund
Executive Board
Annual session 2010
1-4 June 2010
Item 6 of the provisional agenda*

Update on the organizational improvement initiatives

Summary

This report, presented to the Executive Board in accordance with its decision 2007/15, provides an update on progress on implementation and impact of measures taken in response to the organizational review of UNICEF.

I. Introduction

1. The present report is the third update provided to the Executive Board on progress on implementation and impact of measures taken in response to the organizational review of UNICEF.[1] These measures involve the implementation of 10 interconnected improvement initiatives, which focus on strengthening accountability; business process improvement; dynamic programming; enterprise risk management; enterprise resource planning; global partnerships; internal communications; knowledge management; organizational performance management; and talent and leadership management and development. As the implementation evolved into a more substantive phase, the initiatives were consolidated into four specific result areas: **improved accountability and effective risk management; programme excellence; operations performance;** and **effective resource planning and implementation.**

2. The report sets out the progress made on the 10 initiatives and their consolidation into the four areas, highlighting the achievements and challenges to

* E/ICEF/2010/8.

[1] The Executive Board received the first update (E/ICEF/2007/CRP.16) at the 2007 second regular session, and the second update (E/ICEF/2009/CRP.3) at the 2009 first regular session.

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date in each area. Within these four result areas, key changes are emphasized that will bring about a significant improvement in the way UNICEF does business. The report concludes with an overview of the ongoing coordination, communication, learning and roll-out work being carried out to ensure the success of the organizational improvements.

II. The improvement initiatives

3. As reported in the "Update on the Organizational Improvement Initiatives at UNICEF" (E/ICEF/2009/CRP.3), the initial 10 improvement initiatives have taken significant steps towards strengthening the organization's capacity to deliver on its mandate. Throughout 2008 and 2009, these initiatives continued to move forward in reshaping organizational policies, practices and procedures to more effectively and efficiently achieve results for children. Key achievements include the following:

(a) development of an Accountability System for UNICEF as reported to the Executive Board in E/ICEF/2009/15;

(b) launch of the Enterprise Risk Management Policy and Risk Reference Guide;

(c) development and piloting of the simplified programme results structure and multi-year/rolling workplan to enhance the adaptability of country programmes to changing environments and contexts;

(d) development of a strategic framework for partnerships and collaborative relationships;

(e) launch of the UNICEF internal communication network (ICON) home page, which provides staff members with easy access to the latest global developments, key organizational information resources and interactive features;

(f) launch of an annual Global Staff Survey in 2008, with follow-up on findings, led by senior management, at all levels of the organization;

(g) institutionalization of UNICEF 'communities of practice' as a forum for knowledge-sharing and the exchange of good practices, internally and with external partners;

(h) introduction of the country office management report, which provides UNICEF offices with a detailed dashboard to monitor day-to-day operational performance;

(i) launch of UNICEF Employment (e-recruitment), the organizational electronic recruitment system, accessible to both internal and external candidates;

(j) implementation of the New and Emerging Talent Initiative, the Leadership Development Initiative and the management assessment and development centres;

(k) improvement and simplification of key operations business processes, including in the areas of local procurement, travel management, contract review and approval, and harmonized cash transfers;

(l) development of a blueprint for the business process requirements of the new enterprise resource planning application system, VISION;

(m) development of the required policy framework to facilitate the adoption of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) in 2012.

III. Consolidation and the development of four result areas

4. As the 10 improvement initiatives evolved from conceptualization to a more substantive phase of implementation, the links among these initiatives became more evident, calling for strengthened coordination and greater integration and streamlining of the organizational improvement process.

5. Several improvement efforts, such as internal communications, and leadership and talent development and management, became fully mainstreamed within the work of their respective headquarters offices. While these areas continued to fall within the umbrella of the organizational improvement process, they no longer required the same level of coordination. The remaining improvement initiatives were brought together into a more coherent and comprehensive programmatic and management improvement package of four result areas. These effectively capture the comprehensive changes that UNICEF aims to achieve so that it can strengthen organizational capacity to meet MTSP targets.

A. Improved accountability and effective risk management

6. Improvements in this area aim to create an operational environment in which there exists a clear understanding of roles, responsibilities, and functions; comprehensive and efficient accountability and oversight; and risk-informed management policies and practices. These elements create the frameworks for UNICEF programmes and business processes that will contribute effectively to the achievement of results for children through the realization of the MTSP.

7. The UNICEF accountability system is being consolidated, incorporating an updated internal accountability framework, which details functions, roles and responsibilities at all levels of the organization and ensures both vertical and horizontal alignment. Senior-level discussions have contributed to development of recommendations on approaches to achieving greater convergence through strengthened oversight and internal governance bodies. New methodologies are being explored to improve coordinated support to country programmes by headquarters and regional offices. Proposals are being considered for improved guidance and tools for the fulfilment of UNICEF functions, roles and responsibilities within sector-wide approaches and United Nations system-wide coherence efforts, and for resource mobilization and leveraging through partnerships.

8. Following the launch in 2009 of the Enterprise Risk Management Policy and UNICEF Risk Reference Guide, practical tools have been developed to enable staff at all levels to strengthen risk management practices in their daily work. These include the creation of a risk management governance structure that builds on existing organizational governance mechanisms at global, regional and country office levels; the identification of a global network of risk focal points that embeds the risk management function in every office; the updating of the UNICEF Risk Profile and the Risk Control Library; the development of Enterprise Risk

Management training packages; and the roll-out of the Risk Control Self-Assessment tool.

9. A new audit approach introduced in 2009 focuses on high-level strategic issues rather than compliance, supporting the overall shift in emphasis of UNICEF towards upstream programme implementation. The new approach enhances the ability of country offices to manage risks and provide effective governance and oversight.

10. New guidance and tools introduced in the area of evaluation in 2009 also support accountability and risk management across the organization. Guidance on the implementation of the Evaluation Policy (E/ICEF/2008/4), which was approved by the Executive Board in 2008, provides details on arrangements, operationalization and accountabilities. Supporting tools were also developed on management responses to evaluations. These aim to strengthen the effective use of evaluation as a management function, and to foster greater ownership for the process and accountability for results. A tracking system was implemented to document management's response and follow-up actions to evaluations, providing a written record of which actions are planned and carried out in response to evaluations.

11. UNICEF initiated the programme performance assessment (PPA) to appraise the strategic positioning of UNICEF in a country, as well as its performance with respect to five strategic management practices that were identified as contributing to the achievement of organizational aims as articulated in the medium-term strategic plan: (a) engagement with partners; (b) management of strategies and annual priorities; (c) advocacy management; (d) knowledge management; and (e) capacity development of national partners. The PPAs include document reviews and interviews with staff, government partners, donors, multilateral and bilateral partners, and non-governmental organizations. The pilot phase of the PPA, a joint venture by the offices of Evaluation and Internal Audit, has concluded and a review is under way to determine the role of the PPA within the UNICEF accountability and oversight system, and its contribution to overall organizational learning.

12. These guides and tools related to audit and evaluation enhance accountability in the organization. They also contribute to the management of risks, as the effective use of audit and evaluation findings contributes to more risk-informed decision-making.

13. The UNICEF Regulatory Framework is being updated and consolidated, providing staff at all levels with a user-friendly repository of streamlined and simplified organizational policy, procedures, rules, regulations and guidance resulting from the overall improvement process. The framework will be a critical tool for accountability and risk management, as it will include clear accountabilities and risk-informed guidance for business process implementation.

B. Programme excellence

14. The second result area focuses on making UNICEF programmes more dynamic and innovative. Such programmes, informed by national and global knowledge resources on child development issues, will contribute to the achievement of lasting national development results that impact positively on the lives of children and women. To achieve lasting results for children, the strengthened engagement of

UNICEF in partnerships and collaborative relationships will become more strategic and responsive to the needs and requirements of partners.

15. The introduction of the simplified programme results structure and the multi-year/rolling workplan aims to make UNICEF programmes more dynamic by strengthening their focus on the achievement of strategic results for children. Previously, country programmes were often encumbered with multiple levels of planned results that emphasized activities. The new structure more clearly demonstrates alignment of the country programme to national priorities by moving emphasis away from project-level efforts towards a more concentrated and strategic upstream approach. Coupled with other innovative dynamic programming approaches and tools such as the 'strategic moment of reflection', the simplified programme results structure and multi-year/rolling workplan are key to strengthening UNICEF programme excellence.

16. The simplified programme results structure has only two levels of results: programme component results (PCRs) and intermediate results (IRs). PCRs, which link directly to national priorities and describe expected significant changes, are the higher-level results to be achieved by the end of the programming cycle. IRs are the lower-level results that contribute to the achievement of the respective PCRs.

17. Each IR is given a time frame for achievement within the programme cycle. As it may not be possible to define all IRs at the start of the programming cycle, new IRs can be introduced (or closed) at any time to respond to changing national or programme contexts. Therefore, while PCRs reflect the longer-term strategic objectives of the country programme, the more flexible IRs facilitate innovations and the ability to make course corrections identified with national partners to ensure effective achievement of programme results. This simplified programme results structure complements inter-agency coherence efforts: PCRs are equivalent in scope and content to the expected outcomes in the matrix of the Country Programme Action Plan as well as to the country programme/agency outcomes in the matrix of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

18. Multi-year/rolling workplans allow offices to better harmonize the country programme cycle with government planning, budgeting and reporting cycles. Harmonization of these cycles helps to eliminate implementation gaps, thereby leading to more efficient programme partnerships. Multi-year/rolling workplans also allow for the development of more realistic time frames for the achievement of results, and facilitate the continuous implementation of programmes from year to year by avoiding the need to prepare new workplans for each calendar year.

19. Multi-year/rolling workplans are developed to achieve one or more IRs, allowing country offices to budget for an IR over a time period appropriate for the context. A rolling workplan sets out detailed actions for the initial period of the overall planning cycle, and indicative actions for the subsequent period. As the workplan rolls forward, actions become more detailed and further indicative actions are set out for the subsequent period. At the end of one planning period, a new multi-year workplan is introduced.

20. The introduction of the simplified programme results structure and multi-year/rolling workplans will lead to lighter planning processes, more effective and flexible programming, and alignment to government cycles, which together will contribute to the achievement of better results for children.

21. All UNICEF offices will implement the simplified programme results structure and multi-year/rolling workplans by 1 January 2012. Preliminary technical guidance was issued on these approaches in the fourth quarter of 2009. Training will be supported by the updated Programme Policy and Procedure Manual and related training, and other tools, including further technical guidance. The new programming approaches are also being integrated into organization-wide meetings and capacity development initiatives, including Regional Management Team meetings, Deputy Representative and Operations Managers meetings, regional network meetings, and Leadership and Management training programmes.

22. Twenty-six country offices were selected to pilot the simplified programme results structure and multi-year/rolling workplan approach beginning in January 2010. These offices are participating in a community of practice networking platform to discuss and share their experiences throughout the pilot phase. Lessons learned, best practices and experiences gained from these countries will serve as important contributions to the revision of relevant programme policies and guidance, and in the development of training materials and tools, including online learning.

23. The introduction of a dynamic programming approach is not without challenges. A major factor in ensuring the successful implementation of the simplified programme results structure will be changing the way UNICEF does business particularly the continued strategic shift in emphasis from supporting project efforts to longer-term upstream programme and policy work. Organizational leadership at all levels will support the cultural change required within each office, as well as among partners and stakeholders, in order to facilitate the implementation of this more strategic approach in the way UNICEF works.

24. UNICEF also consulted with inter-agency partners to ensure that the simplified programme results structure complements United Nations coherence programme practices at country level, ensuring consistency, in particular, between the simplified programme results structure and the UNDAF. Feedback received from United Nations Country Teams in countries piloting the simplified structure indicates that the approach is seen as a positive innovation with potential advantages for United Nations programming.

25. The alignment of UNICEF work planning with national planning cycles raised concerns on meeting organizational calendar-year reporting requirements. Experiences from pilot countries to date indicate that country offices are able to meet both national and UNICEF reporting requirements by aggregating findings from national planning and review exercises with the real-time data provided through VISION without duplicating review and reporting processes.

26. Programme excellence in UNICEF will also be strengthened through the implementation of the Performance Management Information System. This system will provide managers with a web-based tool to monitor and assess management performance through standardized organizational key performance indicators, and to monitor and assess programme performance against planned results.

27. Knowledge and content management efforts to date have focused on strengthening the internal knowledge management capacity of UNICEF through the institutionalization of tools for more effective knowledge sharing across the organization. These tools include communities of practice and mechanisms for

documenting, disseminating and accessing lessons learned and good practices. Such innovations will be reflected in the comprehensive Knowledge Management Framework being developed. This initiative is increasingly focusing on the effective use of knowledge management through the engagement of external partners and stakeholders for children's rights, recognizing the important role of UNICEF as a knowledge broker on children's issues. More emphasis will be placed on closer collaboration among the programme, research and evaluation functions; the development of knowledge networks and partnerships to support innovation, learning, knowledge sharing and collaborative knowledge creation; the identification of new approaches to organizing, accessing and presenting knowledge; and greater openness to sharing and collaborating with external entities to make full use of technologies.

28. Programme excellence is also being advanced through the realization of the UNICEF strategic framework for partnerships and collaborative relationships, which was approved by the Executive Board in 2009. UNICEF has created an implementation team comprising staff from various UNICEF offices that have a stake in effecting the changes in policy, procedure and guidance necessary to strengthen the capacity of UNICEF to more effectively engage with partners in achieving results for children. Information on new modalities for engagement and guidance for the development of Programme Cooperation Agreements, as well as Small Scale Funding Agreements with civil society organizations, have been disseminated.

C. Operations performance

29. The third result area is operations performance. This involves optimizing the use of strategic resources through the development of more efficient business models and processes that enable the organization to plan and manage assets, and to monitor and report on organizational targets at global, regional and country levels. These results are being achieved through improving business processes; strengthening human resources and supply management; and introducing new tools for performance management.

Business process improvement

30. Several key improvements are being introduced to simplify business processes in order to make operations performance less burdensome for UNICEF offices and implementing partners. The simplified programme results structure and multi-year/rolling workplans, described above, aim to make the programme planning process lighter and more time efficient. The rules governing contract review have also been made more flexible through various measures: the revision of roles and membership of the Contracts Review Committee; the use of proper risk management to determine financial limits for different types of contracts; the modification of thresholds on contracts requiring review to reduce transaction costs; and the introduction of standard procedures, tools and templates that simplify the contract review process.

31. New travel policies and procedures aim to reduce the volume of transaction processing, while maintaining the appropriate internal controls. New processes de-link the financial closure of official travel from the programmatic reporting

aspects of travel in order to expedite closure. By eliminating steps in the travel settlement process, the number of system transactions is reduced.

32. Efforts are also under way to simplify processes related to direct cash transfers to programme partners, including the extension of timelines for disbursements; a renewed emphasis on capacity-building of partners; and the knowledge management and exchange of lessons learned regarding direct cash transfer practices. These improvements have also been proposed at the inter-agency level in the context of the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers.

33. Business process improvements for more effective operations performance are also being realized through the design and development of VISION. The UNICEF VISION team undertook an extensive consultation process with business owners and users to "blueprint" organizational business processes to be integrated into the application system design. This blueprinting provided business owners an opportunity to carry out a more critical analysis of work processes, simplifying and streamlining these to make them more efficient and user-friendly.

Achieving operations performance through human resources management

34. Operations performance has been further enhanced with the launch in 2010 of the new online performance appraisal system, e-PAS. The system will improve the organization's human resource performance management capacity through more objective 180-degree feedback and evaluation of staff performance. The e-PAS system will allow staff to better articulate strengths and areas for improvement and facilitate the completion of the performance evaluation reporting process with real-time data. The system will also further the implementation of the recently enhanced competency framework of UNICEF.

35. UNICEF Employment, the organization's online recruitment system, was launched in 2009. The system allows staff members to search for jobs by functional area, level and location, and receive job alerts when vacancies are posted in their area of interest. Staff members can also check the status of their applications in real time. Similarly, managers will have a larger pool of internal and external candidates from which to search for talent. The new system is expected to improve both the quality and timeliness of recruitment.

36. A more detailed briefing on progress in human resources-related improvements is planned for the 2010 second regular session of the Executive Board, in September.

Supply customer relationship management

37. Improvements and business efficiencies in the area of supply will also enhance the operations performance of UNICEF. For example, the new Supply Customer Relationship Management system, which is being rolled out this year, will offer a new and improved web supply catalogue, and capacity for improved management of customer enquiries, handling of online requests for cost estimates, and online order tracking for internal and external customers.

Performance management information system

38. The performance management information system will play a key role in strengthening operations performance, as it will capitalize on the use of VISION-

generated data to provide managers with real-time tools to monitor and assess operational performance. Tools such as the Office Management Report are furnishing managers with information in several key areas: the status of budget utilization; management processes, including direct cash transfers, donor reports and supply requisitions; and human resources statistics.

D. Effective resource planning and implementation

39. Effective resource planning and implementation, the fourth result area, is seen as a critical driving force in the overall organizational improvement process because of the platform it provides for the implementation of the changes and the adoption of IPSAS.

Rolling out VISION

40. VISION will replace existing separate enterprise resource planning systems at the field and headquarters levels. The new system will provide a single, web-based organizational platform for business transactions and performance management in the areas of programme, contributions, finance and administration, human resources, supply chain, and private fundraising and partnerships. VISION will serve as the single application system for country, regional and headquarters offices, with all its data stored in a central database. The system is based on SAP, the platform also used by the World Bank and the World Food Programme and recently selected by the United Nations Secretariat as its ERP platform.

41. The changeover to VISION is important for several reasons. First, VISION fulfils the need of UNICEF for global and real-time access to one set of data. Second, the system allows full alignment of business processes and tools between headquarters and field locations. Third, the increased system capacity supports the results-based programming and management approach of UNICEF.

42. VISION will capitalize on the benefits of more streamlined and simplified programme and business processes. These include easier interactions and more coordinated work flows among country, regional and headquarters offices as well as an integrated, web-based performance management information system to profile the performance status of all UNICEF offices. As noted above, the Performance Management Information System will provide managers with the necessary tools for more efficient management of the monitoring and assessment of programme performance.

43. VISION is also expected to bring about greater efficiencies in day-to-day operations. The system, accessible by UNICEF staff worldwide, will allow transactional functions to be carried out from any location, including subregional service centres that could support operations for individual country offices. The system's broad accessibility and support capability are expected to lower operating costs for individual UNICEF offices. In the same way, VISION will also improve emergency response capacity, helping to ensure the continuity of operations regardless of disruptions at local level.

44. VISION will be fully operational in all UNICEF offices by 1 January 2012. System development, design and testing are in progress to ensure that VISION adequately meets business requirements at all levels of the organization. This

process includes a series of workshops with Field Reference Group members and headquarters participants to assess the baseline functionality of VISION. This assessment involves a system review covering areas such as business process workflows, data validations, and screen content, layout, and navigation among menus. Feedback from this assessment will guide final development of the system.

45. A training and roll-out strategy is being developed that aims to introduce the new system to country offices with minimum disruption to programme implementation. A VISION learning curriculum is being developed for use by UNICEF staff members before implementation of the system takes place. The curriculum includes guidance notes, online self-learning packages, 'training of trainers/super-users' sessions; information on country, regional and global support teams; WebEx (information-sharing technology) sessions; and on-the-job training opportunities.

46. VISION will be rolled out in a phased manner throughout 2011 to all UNICEF locations. Offices implementing VISION will have the support of a global help desk and a global network of experts to answer questions and resolve issues that may arise.

47. An important challenge being addressed in planning for the roll-out and implementation of VISION is the technical infrastructure capacity of UNICEF offices to run the system. Important investments have already been made to increase bandwidth in all locations where UNICEF works and to strengthen information technology infrastructure in order to make VISION operational and sustainable.

48. Another challenge raised was the technical proficiency required to use SAP, the platform on which VISION is built. While UNICEF headquarters and regional offices already use SAP-based applications, UNICEF country offices currently use the ProMS (Programme Manager System) software developed internally for UNICEF. SAP functionality is being adapted to the realities of UNICEF field operations. The VISION learning strategy will familiarize staff with SAP before roll-out.

49. Backup measures will also be put in place so that UNICEF offices can maintain functionality in case technical difficulties temporarily hamper roll-out and implementation.

Adopting International Public Sector Accounting Standards

50. The adoption of IPSAS by the United Nations, as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 60/283 of 7 July 2006, is a key part of United Nations management reform. UNICEF is committed to being IPSAS-compliant as of 1 January 2012, and the Executive Board has been updated on IPSAS adoption in several reports.

51. IPSAS will enhance the quality of the financial reporting of UNICEF by increasing the type and amount of financial information collected and published by UNICEF through its Financial Statements. UNICEF will therefore have at its disposal a richer set of financial information that can be used as part of the governance process; management of this information will require assignment of accountabilities. Making this information public through reporting to the Executive Board will increase the transparency of UNICEF financial management and results. Furthermore, IPSAS compliance will facilitate a more comparative assessment of

UNICEF performance across the United Nations system, given the fact that each United Nations entity is required to adopt IPSAS and follow the same reporting requirements.

52. In order to collect the larger volume of information required under IPSAS, UNICEF is working on strengthening the management and monitoring of its programme inputs and reporting practices.

53. In 2008, UNICEF completed an analysis to identify the high-level impact of IPSAS adoption on policy, process and systems. This analysis informed a high-level implementation plan, which was developed in 2009 and communicated to the Executive Board. The plan describes four key implementation phases: (a) policy development (completed in 2009); (b) systems development (in progress within the VISION project, with the changes needed to implement IPSAS incorporated into the design of VISION); (c) change management, including pre-implementation activities, communication and training (planning is under way and being conducted with the VISION team); and (d) report preparation.

54. The differences between the United Nations System Accounting Standards (UNSAS) and IPSAS are significant. UNICEF will need to understand, internalize and absorb the changes required and provide timely guidance to staff in order to adopt IPSAS by 2012. To address this challenge, the years 2010 and 2011 have been designated 'preparatory'. In this time period, UNICEF is developing and rolling out guidance, communication activities and training in order to strengthen the capacity of UNICEF offices, and staff members at all levels, for IPSAS compliance.

55. The simultaneous implementation of IPSAS and VISION is both a challenge and an opportunity. The IPSAS and VISION teams are working closely to ensure smooth integration of the two processes. The VISION design has been made fully IPSAS-compliant. The two teams are working closely to identify required changes to business processes so that the reporting requirements can be met and required changes can be made to organizational policy, procedure and guidance and integrated into the regulatory framework. The teams are identifying interim measures that will allow offices that migrate to VISION in 2011 to continue to meet UNSAS requirements until IPSAS comes into effect. A fully integrated training and roll-out strategy covering VISION, IPSAS and the simplified programme results structure and the multi-year/rolling workplan will help to ensure that UNICEF offices and their staff have the capacity to meet the challenges that may arise from simultaneous implementation of these key changes.

IV. Ensuring the success of the organizational improvement process

56. The Change Management Office will continue to coordinate the development, communication, roll-out and implementation of the organizational improvement process, under the oversight of the Office of the Executive Director. In 2009, the capacity of the Change Management Office to assume this role was strengthened with the addition of dedicated capacity in the areas of change management, communications and learning strategy development. The 'Implement 360°' website has been launched on the UNICEF intranet to serve as the information resource for all organizational improvement issues.

57. Coordination and oversight of the organizational improvement process was also strengthened through the convergence of all four result areas under a single project board. A newly created network of Divisional Coordinators includes representatives from each headquarters office who have the authority to make and/or facilitate decisions on organizational improvement issues. A draft organizational improvement results framework has been developed, detailing the outcomes the organization wants to achieve at the end of the improvement process and listing the outputs that build towards these outcomes under the four result areas. The results framework will serve as the basis for future evaluation of the achievements of the improvement process.

58. It is also necessary to highlight the importance of internal and inter-agency consultation in securing the success of the organizational improvements. Internally, for example, the Change Management Office and 'owners' of the improvement initiatives frequently engage with representatives of field reference groups and country office pilots through workshops and WebEx sessions to collect feedback on user needs, the functionality of system design, and lessons learned from preliminary practice. At the inter-agency level, other United Nations agencies have also provided useful feedback on and validation of the improvements being realized. Several United Nations organizations have either completed or are implementing improvements similar to those taking place in UNICEF. Lessons learned and good practices emerging from these experiences are a vital asset to the change management process in UNICEF.

59. A critically important factor in the success of the improvement process is the engagement of senior management at all levels. For this reason, learning and change management sessions are being included on the agendas of all Regional Management Team meetings, Deputy Representative and Operations Managers meetings, and technical network meetings. The aim is to build support among, and the capacity of, senior managers to lead the implementation of improvements and changes in their offices.

60. Effective communication of the organizational improvements is essential to their success. The Change Management communications approach aims to reach staff at all levels of the organization. When possible, communications will target specific audiences comprising staff members whose roles and functions are affected by the improvements, pinpointing how the changes will affect daily work. The strategy capitalizes on existing organizational internal communication tools, including 'communities of practice', virtual technical networks, and the UNICEF intranet. Global and regional meetings are used to ensure 'cascading' communications whereby managers are provided with the necessary tools to orient staff on organizational improvements. Peer-to-peer communication on the changes is also promoted through the global, regional and local staff associations. Communications aim to convey the expected benefits of improvements for the organization and for staff members, as well as actions expected of staff members to ensure smooth implementation. To achieve maximum effect, communications are designed to be issue-specific and realistic on the time frame and possible challenges of implementation. Communications are also multilingual in order to reach a wide range of staff at all levels.

61. Implementation of the communications strategy is closely linked with the implementation of the change management learning strategy to ensure the highest

level of coherence. The learning strategy is designed to cause minimum disruption to staff and country office business operations by taking a coordinated approach to learning and training for stakeholders at all levels of the organization, and by linking training efforts to the country programme cycle. Learner-centred methods are being employed, complemented by the integration of learning modules into existing training and network meetings and cascading training approaches as appropriate. A phased approach to training will help to ensure optimal retention and application of new skills by staff members. Hands-on training will be supported by communication and orientation sessions to prepare staff for planned implementation milestones.

62. The learning strategy initially focuses on leading and managing change in the organization and on rolling out the three key changes — the simplified programme results structure and multi-year/rolling workplans, VISION and IPSAS. The Change Management Office will continue to work with improvement owners to identify and develop new training modules as additional improvements prepare for roll-out and implementation. Training on the different improvements will be delivered in an integrated and coherent approach, highlighting the dependencies and linkages among the various changes.

63. The Change Management Office will continue to assist improvement owners through coordination, communication, training, and roll-out support. Most notably, in addition to the roll-out of the major changes, work will be intensified to move forward the consolidation of the accountability system and the implementation of the Enterprise Risk Management Policy. This will be accomplished through the development of guidance and practical tools benefiting all staff in their daily work. Support will also be given to the development of the Knowledge and Content Management initiative, as well as the implementation of the action plan to mainstream the UNICEF strategic framework for partnerships and collaborative relationships.

64. Once fully implemented, these organizational changes will further sharpen the focus of UNICEF on results, improving the organization's operational efficiency and streamlining its business processes. As a result, UNICEF will be more strategically placed to enhance its contributions to achieving results for children and women through the realization of the MTSP and to meet the challenges of its mandate.